190. Responsible Government.

MR. P. K. RAGHAVAN PILLAI (*Member, Chirayinkil taluk, Group II*) said that representative institutions were not unknown in ancient Travancore. Travancore had her *Karayogams, Nattukutams* and *Desasanghams*, all institutions instinct with the true spirit of democracy. But none of these institutions was in existence at the present time or if any existed they had long ago ceased to fulfil their original functions. This deplorable situation was brought about by successive administrations of foreign Dewans, who in their eagerness to exercise autocratic powers stifled what elements of responsible government they found in the State. Among foreign Dewans there were certainly great and noble men like Mr. V. P. Madhava Row, the father of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly; but the generality of them were enemies of popular Government. This could be seen from the history of the Legislative Council. The powers of that body which started with full legislative powers were curtailed only during the time of foreign Dewans. The degeneracy of several departments for the well-being of the people also illustrated the apathy of foreign Dewans. Such for instance were the Sanitary Department, the Irrigation Department etc.

An executive council responsible to the legislature would alone serve the interests of the people. It might probably be said that Travancore had not yet developed a good party system in political matters, that what parties existed followed only communal lines, and that therefore she was unfit to have an executive council. But there was no substance in that plea. Communal squabbles existed because there was no government responsible to the people. Political parties would be formed, when parties were given political power.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. P. K. Raghavan Pillai, I will deal with your representation so far as it relates to the subject of responsible Government when I give a collective answer to all the members who spoke upon the same subject.

191. Suggestions for the economic improvement of the country.

MR. S. SUBRAHMONYA IYER (*Member, Kalkulam taluk, Group I*) said that there were vast tracts of uncultivated lands at the disposal of Government, which if brought under cultivation would go a long way towards improving the export trade of the country. But the cultivation of these lands was possible only with the help of capital and organisation. Even if these lands were offered free of *taravila*, it would not be possible to find *bonafide* applicants. The actual cultivators of lands were poor and could not afford to take to cultivation as no land would be yielding for the first few years. But if they were given money to maintain themselves with during the period of waiting, they would be willing to come forward for taking over the lands. A scheme for land colonisation was hence very desirable.

Persons desirous of permanently settling themselves on land for the purpose of cultivation should be given lands and an officer of the Agricultural Department should be appointed to advise them and to

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supervise their work till they were able to make a living from the lands. Such a scheme was being tried in Mysore. It was also being tried on a small scale in Travancore itself by the Director of Agriculture in the Konni agricultural farm. Such a scheme would prove an effective solution of the problem of assignment of land to the depressed classes.

It might perhaps be said that land colonisation schemes were unworkable. The scheme adumbrated in G. O. dated the 13th November 1924, was for instance, not working satisfactorily in spite of the lofty ideals set forth in its preamble. The defect of the scheme was that the methods proposed were unworkable. The G. O. fixed a minimum *taravila*. No concessions were also contemplated in it and hence poor men could not take advantage of the scheme.

The Department of Industries should be placed under the control of the Registrar of Co-operative Societies. At present the duties of the Director of Industries were being tacked on to the Director of Geology. The Department was not hence working properly.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Subramonia Aiyar, you referred to the land colonisation scheme of 1924 as not working satisfactorily. I go a step further and say that it is not working at all. The reason is that there is a fundamental unsuitability between these rules and the conditions obtaining in Travancore. It may be perfectly easy and entirely advantageous to all concerned in a place like the Punjab or, as you instanced, Mysore, to have land colonisation schemes. But the preconditions to the application of such a scheme are these. First of all large expanses of cultivable lands which are lying uncultivated simply for want of people who will go and settle on the land. Such a position arises as a rule only in a sparsely populated country. The position is entirely different in Travancore. Here we have a very limited area of cultivable land in the State and a populace which is ready to rush to any cultivable land that can be placed at their disposal. I will mention two instances. Now the Neriamangalam—Pallivasal road is being cut and people have got scent of the fact that there are excellent lands on the side of this road. The Secretariat has been swamped with applications for these lands from persons willing to pay high prices. Similarly, too, I discovered that in Todupuzha, there are a few thousand acres of cultivable land fit to be opened up. I am having the land surveyed. In the meanwhile, the people are impatient to go into the land. It is as much as the authorities can do to stop their entering into occupation before survey is completed. You can imagine how keen the competition is when I say for the waste lands put up to auction Rs. 80 and Rs. 90 plus *tadivila* Rs. 50 an acre is the amount of bid. I can give one instance in which about Rs. 250 was offered. All things considered,

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the difficulty is not to find people for the land but to find land for the people. With the very limited area we have, the only possibility is to throw open forest reserves wherever such reservations are not absolutely necessary, or are not profitable or are truly valueless to the Forest Department. This is the course we are steadily pursuing and any such proposition as the Land Colonisation Scheme will, I think, prove a dead letter.

You referred to the Koni settlement as a land colonisation scheme. There you are mistaken. The Koni farms are nothing but places upon which middle class boys who are trained at the Alwaye Agricultural School are settled and money advanced to them so that they can start cultivation themselves—not cultivation by Pulayas or Parayas as they do here but cultivation by these boys themselves. They are drawn from all castes—Nairs, Syrian Christians—there is, I believe a Nambiar, and one or two other castes who are actually cultivating the soil. That is not colonisation of the land but diverting middle class people from clerical or professional occupations for which they have been yearning and directing them to the very useful task of working on these farms and becoming small proprietors.

MEMBER : I only pray for the extension of that.

DEWAN : We will extend it through more agricultural schools.

You referred to the fact that the duties of the Director of Industries have been tacked on to those of the Director of Geology. This is the first I have heard of that arrangement. In fact I can assure you that there is no such appointment as the Director of Geology. If you went through the pages of the Civil List, you will find that no Director of Geology exists. The Industries Department is doing its best but it is a very up-hill game. I for one will not launch out into large schemes of industries before the country becomes industrially minded.

192. The political life of the country.

MR. JOSEPH MALIAKAL (*Member, Nominated*) said that the political atmosphere of the country twenty-five years ago was just the opposite of what it was at the present time. Then there was complete harmony prevailing among the various communities. But with the spread of the present system of education a rush for Government appointments set in and with that originated discord among the people. The first feelings of dislike were roused against the foreign Brahmins who, it was suspected, were appropriating all the appointments for themselves. The next turn was that of the Nayars. All the other communities thought that the Nayars were having an unfair share of the appointments. Then came the turn of the Christians. Ezhavas and Muslims thought that the Christians were getting a greater share of the

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